

Split disbursement a must for military travelers

BY STAFF SGT. A.J. BOSKER
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON — All military travelers must now select the split disbursement option on their travel voucher claims to directly pay their government travel card expenses, according to finance officials.

Split disbursement requires travelers to tally up their travel card expenses and authorize enough funds to be sent automatically to pay off their charges, said Michael G. Weber, Air Force travel card program manager at the Pentagon. Any remaining travel settlement will still be sent to the traveler's personal account.

"Although this change was mandated by the 2003 National Defense

Authorization Act to reduce the number of delinquent travel card accounts, split disbursement really is a win-win for everyone," Weber said. "It simplifies the payment process for travelers, gets the bank their money more quickly and reduces the number of delinquent accounts."

Nearly half of all Air Force travelers already use split disbursement on a regular basis when filing their vouchers because it simplifies the process for them, Weber said.

"Airmen no longer have to wait for their travel money to be credited to their personal accounts before they can mail a check to the bank," he said. "It saves them the cost of a stamp or a trip to a bank branch and gets the money to the bank within two or three days."

By having all travelers pay off their travel card bills automatically, the Air Force should see a decrease in the number of delinquent accounts, he said. This is especially true if a traveler returns from temporary duty as a billing cycle is about to turn over, because they can pay off the card before their account becomes 30 days past due.

If a traveler charges more to their travel card than they were authorized, they still must select split disbursement and also reimburse the bank any additional charges, he added.

"Selecting split disbursement on a travel voucher, whether done manually or on an automated travel system, is easy and requires only a few clicks of the mouse or one block

to be checked on a form," Weber said.

Supervisors and approving officials are required to verify travelers selected split disbursement before signing off on any voucher, he said.

"If split disbursement is not selected on a voucher, it will be returned to the traveler to be redone," he said. "This may delay the processing of the claim and potentially put the traveler's travel card account into a past-due status."

Although split disbursement is not yet mandatory for civilian employees, Weber encouraged them to take advantage of its timesaving benefit.

Questions on this policy should be directed to Master Sgt. Mary Brooks, 853-6616.

Kirtland AFB officers have streak of bad judgment

Albuquerque police arrested two officers from the 377 Medical Group May 30 and charged them with aggravated indecent exposure.

After the May 30 Albuquerque Isotopes baseball game, the officers stripped off their clothes and "streaked" across the field.

The charges are being handled by Albuquerque Police Department and base officials will take appropriate military action after the conclusion of an internal investigation.

Col. Kathleen Close, 377 Air Base Wing commander, apologized to the Albuquerque community and those who attended the ball game.

"This type of behavior falls far below the standards of what we expect from Air Force personnel," Close said. "This conduct will not be tolerated."

Both men have been relieved of their normal duties until all investigations are concluded.

Scams target military, e-mail users

Although the federal tax filing season ended April 15, the Internal Revenue Service continues to see isolated instances of tax scams.

Two new schemes target families of those serving in the armed forces and e-mail users. In both schemes, people represent themselves as being from the IRS.

The IRS warns consumers to beware of any variation of a scenario in which a telephone caller posing as an IRS employee tells a family member he is entitled to a \$4,000 refund because his relative is in the armed forces and then requests a credit card number to cover a \$42 fee for postage.

The scammer provides an actual IRS toll-free number as the call-back number to make the call seem legitimate. However, the scammer then charges unauthorized purchases with the victim's card.

Genuine IRS employees

who call taxpayers do not ask for credit card numbers or request fees for payment of a refund.

In another scheme, victims receive an e-mail that appears to be from the IRS. The e-mail contains links to a non-IRS Internet Web page that asks for personal and financial information. Such information could be used to steal the respondent's identity and get access to sensitive financial data or accounts.

People who believe they are victims of one of these scams can contact the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration by calling the toll-free fraud referral hotline at 800-366-4484, faxing a complaint to 202-927-7018 or writing to the TIGTA Hotline, P.O. Box 589, Ben Franklin Station, Washington, DC 20044-0589. TIGTA's Web site is located at www.ustreas.gov/tigta.

New Mexico parks free to military next weekend

New Mexico State Parks offers free admission to 29 state parks for active duty military people June 13-15 as a salute to the armed forces during the Flag Day weekend.

"We are proud to extend this invitation in recognition of our brave men and women in uniform," New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson said.

"We salute you, and hope

this will be a small token showing the appreciation of you and your families from all New Mexicans."

The offer includes free park admission June 13-15 and free camping Friday and Saturday nights for every vehicle carrying someone with an active-duty U.S. or allied-forces military identification card.

Campsite utility hookups will carry a charge.

New Mexico State Parks has scheduled a wide variety of weekend activities and educational programs at parks statewide.

Visitors will be able to view a full moon from the light-pollution free parks.

For more information about the Flag Day weekend offer or about New Mexico State Parks, call 888-667-2757 or visit the parks Web site at www.nmparks.com for a calendar of events.

New program recruits student engineers

BY EVA D. HENDREN

**Directed Energy Directorate
Public Affairs**

A college engineering student has joined the Air Force Research Laboratory for a summer in a new recruiting effort called the Air Force Officer Accession and Training Schools Technical Recruiting Internship Program.

Jonathan A. Hutton, a sophomore from the Rochester Institute of Technology, started May 30 as the newest member of the laser division at the Directed Energy Directorate.

Hutton is one of nine aeronautical and electrical engineering students at Kirtland AFB in the new internship program directed by the Secretary of the Air Force.

The college sophomores will work throughout the summer as GS-04s for Air Force Research Laboratory's Directed Energy and Space Vehicles Directorates.

Engineering interns at Kirtland AFB include Hutton; Eamonn Needler, Thomas Shaw, and Jeffrey Mann from Purdue University; Jason Hall from The Citadel; Chang-Kun Chen from Texas; Elena Belategui from Louisiana State University; Zachary Health from Portland; and Shirali Patel from Illinois Institute of Technology.

Because the aim of the program is recruitment, it is hoped that upon completion of the internship Hutton will accept an offer of an ROTC scholarship and join the Air Force.

The new program is headed by the



Photo by Eva Hendren

Jonathan Hutton, an engineering student, is working with the Directed Energy Directorate for the summer under the new Air Force Officer Accession and Training Schools Technical Recruiting Internship Program.

Air Force ROTC and is designed to recruit college sophomores and juniors at their colleges and universities. The ROTC detachment commanders recruit through the college and then forward those eligible to ROTC headquarters. If the candidates meet the criteria of the program, they are then hired

into the Student Temporary Employment Program within the Air Force and assigned to an Air Force laboratory for ten weeks. At the conclusion of the 10 weeks, the interns are offered an opportunity to join the Air Force through their colleges with a \$15,000/year scholarship.

Hutton learned of the program through a mass e-mail sent to engineering students at Rochester, advertising a career cooperative opportunity. He met the criteria for the program, and entered the program, assigned to the laboratory. Unfamiliar with ROTC or the Air Force, he had never considered a military career. The co-op program with the ROTC, however, has made the idea of an Air Force career a strong possibility.

Hutton is assigned to the Tactical Systems Branch in the laser division here. The branch's work includes solid-state and semiconductor lasers, as well as infrared and mid-infrared technology for applications within the Air Force.

He is paired with a mentor in the branch, 2nd Lt. Rob Hill. Hill is a fellow engineer who has been assigned to the directorate at Kirtland AFB for the past year. His role in Hutton's 10 weeks here is to provide guidance, instruction, and make Hutton's time here as educational and welcoming as possible.

Both Hutton and Hill agree that the most beneficial aspect of the co-op is the opportunity to apply the knowledge gained in the classroom in a hands-on setting.

Although Hutton had prior lab experience through the college, he says it is "nice to see real-world conditions and applications" of what he has learned in a laboratory environment.